

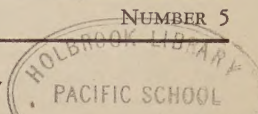
Social Questions Bulletin

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FEDERATIONISTS MEET AT MILL VALLEY



With some 100 in attendance from all sections of our country, in the Methodist Church which delegates probably regard as the most hospitable in the country; in superbly beautiful Mill Valley, California; under the inspiring Chairmanship of our beloved President, Bishop Francis J. McConnell; with a brilliant array of outstanding speakers (Bishop L. O. Hartman, Dr. Henry Atkinson, Dr. D. W. Throckmorton, Rev. Ha Tai Kim of the Korean Methodist Church, San Francisco, Mr. Lim P. Lee, leading Chinese-American Methodist layman, in addition to those listed in the April Bulletin); with the thoroughly democratic thrashing-out of eight memorials to the General Conference on important social issues (texts of the memorials available free to any members on request)—memorials which, as finally worded, secured unanimous delegate support, and most of which secured General Conference concurrence; with memorable periods of high worship concluding with Holy Communion administered by Bishop McConnell—what many regard as the hap-

The Methodist Federation for Social Action, an unofficial membership organization, seeks to deepen within the Church, the sense of social obligation and opportunity to study, from the Christian point of view, social problems and their solutions; and to promote social action in the spirit of Jesus. The Federation rejects the method of the struggle for profit as the economic base for society and seeks to replace it with social-economic planning to develop a society without class or group discriminations and privileges. In seeking these objectives the Federation does not commit its members to any specific program, but remains an inspirational and educational agency, proposing social changes by democratic decision, not by violence.

piest and most encouraging of all M.F.S.A. Membership Meetings was held April 20-22, just before General Conference. The June Bulletin will give a fuller report. If requests are adequate, texts and recordings of available addresses will be offered at low cost.

Local and Conference Chapters Furthered

Mill Valley, with many individual Federation members now, promises an active local M.F.S.A. chapter.

A fine new chapter was organized in Wichita, Kansas, just after General Conference with Rev. H. L. Overton, Wichita Methodist Pastor, as first president.

With strong backing given the Federation by the Delaware Conference presiding Bishop, a new chapter was organized there shortly after the General Conference, with an Executive Committee of five leading pastors and laymen already promoting Federation memberships and emphases.

GENERAL CONFERENCE ACTION ON M.F.S.A.—AN ANALYSIS

What Federationists Proposed

The 1952 General Conference rejected this resolution offered for a substantial minority and for M.F.S.A. officials, friends and representatives, by Dr. Henry Hitt Crane:

"We respectfully request the Council of Bishops of The Methodist Church to set up an impartial commission to investigate the Methodist Federation for Social Action, as well as other unofficial organizations and publications using the word 'Methodist' in their titles, and about which there is likely to be confusion in the public mind as to their unofficial character." Its introduction and espousal by Federation leaders and representatives made clear to General Conference delegates, to all Methodists, and to the general public that the 45-year-old Methodist Federation for Social Action has nothing to hide in its long-range goals, its year-to-year programs, or its democratic and peaceful procedures. Procedures in the program-formulating Federation Membership meetings, are themselves in the best traditions both of American democracy and of Wesley's Methodism.

Opponents of the Federation voted against thorough, fair, impartial investigation of the Methodist Federation for Social Action (and of other unofficial organizations or publications), by a body responsible to the General Conference and the Church. (The House Committee on Un-American Activities admits that it has made no such investigation; nor is it a body created by or responsible to the Methodist General Conference. Even if the House Committee had made investigation, no church believing in church-state separation should use *that* investigation—as a substitute for its own—and as a basis for its action. Nor has the recently organized "Circuit Riders, Inc., Membership Composed of Methodists" made any real investigation of the Federation; nor was that body set up by the General Conference, or ever given such investigating responsibility. The same holds for the "Committee for the Preservation of Methodism," of Houston; "The Methodist Challenge" of Los Angeles; "One Methodist Voice" of North Georgia; The *Readers Digest*—which refused to publish Bishop Oxnham's devastating reply to its unfair article; and the Scripps-Howard columnist and press chain which, a few years back charged Methodist Bishops and other Federationists with singing "Red Hymns" at the M.F.S.A. Kansas City Membership Meeting—when every hymn sung was from the official Methodist Hymnal.)

Federation friends and representatives asked fair, thorough and responsible investigation, confident that it would now, as before, vindicate the Federation. No such request for investigation came from the younger, unofficial organizations and publications which have been busy attacking not only the Federation, but respected bishops and other church leaders, official Methodism's Social Creed and pronouncements, and the enlightened social emphases of Methodist Women, Methodist youth, and church-school literature.

Request For Due Process Rejected

Federation spokesmen asked only for the day in court which secular courts give criminals (but which the Federation has not yet had): opportunity for a hearing, an investigation, a trial, due process of law, self-defense, specific charges, confronting and cross-examining hostile witnesses, and equal justice under law. The Federation asked the same rights for its accusers. Dr. Crane put it:

"We trust our bishops. We believe they can set up an impartial commission responsible to this body and that this commission can make a real and impartial investigation, presenting us with a bill of particulars and specific findings. The plea of this report is not simply that the accused have their day in court, but that the accusers have their day as well. Let the charges be brought, and let them be answered, and let an impartial commission sift and weigh the evidence and give us the result.

"This is our simple plea. I think it is basically Christian, I think it is certainly Methodistic. I am sure it is American, and certainly democratic." (Daily Christian Advocate, p. 553).

Did the General Conference majority really intend to deny their fellow-Methodists the basic American and democratic rights granted thieves and murderers by our courts?

Federation opponents (fallaciously, as we shall show) claimed support for their proposals in the April 20, 1950, Resolution of the Council of Bishops of The Methodist Church. If Federation opponents really look to our Bishops for guidance on the Federation—why did they reject the proposal of Federationists that the bishops set up an official, appropriate Methodist commission, responsible to the bishops and to the Church for thoroughly investigating the Federation, and reporting its findings and decisions?

Did they fear an impartial and objective commission would vindicate the Federation but not vindicate their own unofficial organizations and publications?

An Inquiry as to Motives

One Federation opponent answered that Federationists, in proposing an investigation, were only seeking procrastination:

"Brethren, let us not be deceived by the suggested minority report. It is but an attempt to delay action upon this matter. I am bold enough to predict that if that report should be adopted, four years from now we would be right back here, or in some other hall, picking up the same old stick, to run the same old rabbit out of the same old brush pile." (Daily Christian Advocate, p. 553).

Did Federation opponents believe that our bishops would be unduly cumbersome, inefficient, or tardy in an investigation and results?

We on our part do not lack such faith in our bishops. We see no reason why the requested impartial commission could not have proceeded with its investigation speedily—and *speedily* secured results—results reached by thorough, fair, impartial procedures—in the best American, Methodist and democratic traditions.

In retrospect, there is a striking thing about the General Conference debate. Federation opponents admit that their majority-adopted proposals (requesting the Federation to change its name and office location) can only be implemented by Methodist Federation for Social Action members themselves (Daily Advocate, pp. 551, 559), and only when and as Federation members determine. Proposals solely dependent on Federationists for implementation were made by Federation opponents who professed belief that Federationists had no other motive than procrastination or delay! But the proposal introduced and supported by Federationists would have depended for speedy implementation not on the Federation, but on a body created by, responsible to, and under the authority of, our Bishops and the General Conference itself!

From such considerations many at General Conference concluded that the most vigorous Federation opponents were not primarily concerned with the Federation's name or its office location, but rather with telling constituents (stirred up by secular and other misrepresentations)—that the 45-year-old Federation had been properly spanked.

We Propose a Friendly Debate

The majority ordered its resolution printed in the 1952 *Discipline*. We believe it would be healthy if Methodists across the Church subject that resolution to fair, objective and thorough analysis—in the light of democratic, American, Methodist and Christian standards. We would like to see such analysis in the *Christian Advocate* and are ready to make our contribution to it, along with those of contrary persuasion—e.g., representatives of the Board of Publication or of the 1952 General Conference majority. If pages of the *Advocate* or other official publications are opened for that purpose, our M.F.S.A. participation will be on the basis of discussion of the democratic and moral issues, and of an appeal to reason. Such friendly debate could help clarify the issues; and Methodists in general are entitled to an objective presentation of the issues by both sides. It would be a good start if the *Advocate* would, like this *Bulletin*, publish in full the correspondence between the Board of Publication and the Federation, on the question of the Federation's office space. That correspondence itself would lift up and clarify for Methodists some of the real issues involved.

Three Phases of the Conference Voting

Federationists can be encouraged by the trend of the voting at General Conference. A sub-committee first voted 28 for the majority report and 2 against. In the State of the Church Committee as a whole there were 61 recorded votes: Only 38 for the majority report, 17 against, and 5 abstentions. Unfortunately, for purposes of accurate and official record, the vote on the General Conference floor was not recorded. But a substantial minority was against the majority report, and the San Francisco *Chronicle* reported an unusually large number of abstentions. Support of the majority resolution was apparently reduced by consideration of that resolution's implications.

Who Stopped the Conference Debate?

The debate was cut off, the question was called, by opponents of the Federation—before there had been adequate time for presentation and analysis of some of the basic issues involved, and before some of the delegates (who sought the floor to deliver prepared speeches which would have greatly enriched the discussion) had been recognized.

Several outstanding Negro delegates (e.g., Dr. Edgar Love of the Board of Missions, and President M. Lafayette Harris of Philander-Smith College) sought the floor to oppose the majority resolution, but the debate was cut off before a single Negro speaker had been heard. This obviously impoverished the debate. In the State of the Church Committee, however, a Negro delegate from South Carolina, a lay woman, did secure the floor to speak for the Federation and against the majority resolution.

We recommend reading of the verbatim transcript of the debate (Daily Advocate, pp. 550-9), revealing that the majority report was furthered by ten men who secured the floor for presentations or parliamentary maneuvers (e.g., calling the question) on behalf of the majority report. Two of these ten were from the Northeastern Jurisdiction; the other eight were from our two southern white jurisdictions.

The only woman to secure the floor of General Conference was Dr. Georgia Harkness, (Troy Conference, Northeastern) who criticized and sought to change the majority report, as did also Paul V. Shearer of Iowa-Des Moines and Samuel E. Carruth of Northwest Indiana—both of the North Central Jurisdiction. The latter was ruled out of order and denied opportunity to speak to his substitute motion which had been "duly seconded" (Daily Advocate, p. 557). Immediately after Mr. Carruth was ruled out of order, Stewart Clendenin of Texas (South Central Jurisdiction) successfully moved "the previous question on all that is before the house" (Daily Advocate, p. 557)—a maneuver supported by Federation opponents and already tried earlier by Rev. G. M. Davenport of North Alabama, (Daily Advocate, p. 556).

Dr. Emory S. Bucke (New England) was ruled out of order when (after the question had been called) he asked five minutes "to state this point of order . . . the General Conference of the Methodist Church may not legislate on a matter which is not its own creation, an organization of the Methodist Church." (Daily Advocate, p. 558).

Ruled out of order also, just after this, was Dr. Dillon W. Throckmorton (California-Nevada, Western) when he tried to refer a portion of the majority report to the Judicial Council (Daily Advocate, p. 558).

Other opponents of the majority report participating in the debate included: Dr. Henry Hitt Crane (Detroit, North Central), who led the minority; Rev. Raoul C. Calkins (Iowa-Des Moines, North Central); Dr. Loyd F. Worley (New York East, Northeastern). Minority spokesmen were never off in point of fact. Unfortunately the same cannot be claimed for all majority spokesmen—a point we can document on request.

Though eight of the ten Federation opponents in the floor debate were from the two southern white jurisdictions, this is counteracted by the fact that the liberal Bishop who gave the prophetic and freedom-supporting Episcopal Address is also from a southern white jurisdiction.

THE FEDERATION'S NAME

1. The adopted majority resolution *requests* the Federation to drop "Methodist" from its title. As Bishop Reed stated, without challenge, from the chair: "We are not legislating, giving a mandate, but we are making a request." (Daily Advocate, p. 559). Federationists alone can change the organization's name.

2. "Methodist" has been in the Federation's name 45 years since its founders, in 1907, put it there. Federation founders (Frank Mason North, who wrote "Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life", Bishop Herbert Welch, dean of our Methodist Bishops, and others) sought not to confuse or embarrass, but simply to describe. The Federation for 45 years has been Methodist in its roots, in the church ties of its leaders, and in its basic membership character.

Those who want the Methodist membership and leadership character of the Federation to be hidden from the public, should ask themselves whether the majority proposals are really adequate. If the Federation keeps the character it has had for forty-five years, by what possible subterfuge could we keep press or public from recognizing it as a Methodist organization—the organization known for 45 years as the Methodist Federation? Our opponents suggested their motive is to prevent public confusion. To that end, would not they, as well as we, be honor bound in the future to see that this organization, however named, is accurately recognized by both press and public as the organization known for 45 years as the Methodist Federation?

The case of the similar unofficial Episcopal League for Social Action should warn our opponents as to the probable impossibility of hiding from press or public the Methodist character of this organization by a mere change in name. For many years the Episcopal League for Social Action was named Church League for Industrial Democracy. The old name neither stated nor implied that the organization was in any way Episcopalian, but both press and public accurately recognized the organization as Episcopal—led by Episcopal Bishops, Rectors and laymen.

The non-Episcopalian name of the League did not save conservative Episcopalians from embarrassment from the League's progressive and militant stands. Indeed one worry of the conservative Episcopalians was that this obviously Episcopalian organization was known by the unconventional, non-Episcopalian, and disturbingly radical name: Church League for Industrial Democracy! When the organization changed its name to the more Episcopalian and conservative "Episcopal League for Social Action" the more conservative members of our sister denomination were reassured!

If our opponents could drive Federationists out of our Methodist church or frighten good Methodists away from the Federation, they might see the Federation no longer recognized as Methodist. But can less drastic proposals achieve that end?

3. If the General Conference for the first time tells unofficial Methodist groups or publications what not to call themselves—will the process stop with the Federation, or stop with that organization's 45-year-old name?

Is it fair to single out the 45-year-old Methodist Federation in this regard? How shall we interpret the General Conference's silence concerning other equally unofficial organizations and publications which identify themselves in their titles as Methodist, which have certainly been less careful to make their unofficial character clear, and which are considerably younger and less representative of esteemed Methodist leadership than the Federation? Compare *The Methodist Challenge* with the *Social Questions Bulletin*; the word "Methodist" appears nowhere in the *Bulletin's* title. The unofficial membership character of the Federation is spelled out in the masthead on the front page of each issue of the *Bulletin*, as also in each issue's editorial box. No such clarification is attempted by the one-man, and bishop-attacking *The Methodist Challenge*, or by the similar one-man Georgia publication, *One Methodist Voice*.

What about the widely publicized, well-financed, but extremely young "Circuit Riders, Inc., Membership Composed of Methodists"—as they say on their letterhead? Contrast the Federation's letterhead, every sheet of which calls attention to the Federation's unofficial character).

What about the "Committee for the Preservation of Methodism" of Houston? What General Conference ever delegated to them that noble task? Is not their presumptuous title likely to confuse a fairly easily confused public? Are their witch-hunting, dissension-spreading and confidence-undermining activities to be vindicated?

What about many institutions which have the word "Methodist" in their titles yet defy official Methodist social stands by practicing racial discrimination and segregation, such as the Des Plaines Methodist Camp, which practices discrimination in the bounds of the Rock River Conference, or the Jumonville Methodist Training Center, which practices discrimination in the bounds of the Pittsburgh Conference? Are such institutions, which defy official Methodist stands against discrimination less embarrassing to the church, and more entitled to the word "Methodist", than the Federation which for 45 years has never been accused of racial discrimination?

Other unofficial organizations use the word "Methodist" to describe their Methodist membership character and (like the Federation) support the church's Social Creed and ideals, e.g., the Methodist Rural Fellowship and the recently organized Fellowship of Methodist Pacifists. The Daily Christian Advocate, official organ at the General Conference announced two meetings of the former organization (pp. 6, 86). The two Advocate announcements made no reference whatever to the fact that the Methodist Rural Fellowship, precisely like the Methodist Federation for Social Action, is a completely voluntary and unofficial membership organization. No one at General Conference questioned those announcements in the official organ or their failure to specify the organization's unofficial character.

To sum up, there are various unofficial organizations and publications, speaking only for themselves and not for the church (for which the General Conference alone can speak). The extent to which these varying unofficial organizations and publications have made conscientious endeavor to make clear their unofficial character, has varied, but the Federation is willing to have its own record in that regard compared with any of the others.

Is the Methodist Federation for Social Action less entitled to its 45-year-old Methodist title, than the many other unofficial organizations and publications, equally unable to speak officially or for the church, and yet receiving no such request from the General Conference?

As for that request, made only of the Federation, by the General Conference, we promise that it will be fairly considered, discussed, and voted on by Federation members as a whole—as was a similar request made in 1950.

Bills of Attainder are Unconstitutional

The General Conference might have respectfully requested *all* Methodists related to unofficial organizations and/or publications using the word "Methodist" in their titles to drop "Methodist" from the name of their respective organizations or publications. However wise such a request, no one could question its fairness. A standard would have been given for all unofficial organizations and publications using the word "Methodist" to follow. This is the kind of approach a legislative body, like our American Congress or our General Conference, is supposed to take. It would have been in the best American and Methodist tradition.

In the Congress of the United States, with all its admitted faults, bills of attainder, which single out for punitive action any one particular organization, or individual, have long been recognized as unconstitutional. Congress can define a crime, but not single out the criminal. Laws must be in terms of general principles, not directed against particular, singled-out groups. The unconstitutionality of bills of attainder is a precious part of our American and democratic tradition. Has the Methodist Church, for the first time in its history, violated its similar traditions by the unprecedented and possibly unconstitutional act of passing a bill of attainder, singling out a particular organization by name for action widely regarded as punitive and as creating an atmosphere of pressure and intimidation—clearly contrary to the freedom which Methodists and Americans hold dear? If so, this might well do far more harm to our Methodist and American traditions than to the Federation. Dr. Crane and his associates spoke primarily not in defense of the Federation but of due process of law and of basic American, democratic, Methodist and Christian principles.

THE FEDERATION'S OFFICE ADDRESS

Elsewhere, we publish correspondence between the Board of Publication and the Federation. That correspondence will speak for itself to every fair-minded reader.

Issues on this question are very important:

1. *The Federation was given no hearing, and no warning before the Board action asking it to vacate its offices.* Federation leaders, including the esteemed Bishop who is its President, first learned of

the action, through press and radio reports. Punishment of any kind, certainly including eviction, without a hearing or due process, is unfair—and out of keeping with our American and Methodist traditions.

2. *The Federation's response to the Board has been to ask opportunity to sit down with Board representatives, to discuss the whole matter, and to try to work the thing out in a mutual, brotherly, Methodist and Christian way.* The Federation has asked the Board repeatedly to set the date for such consultation. The Board has not accepted this reasonable request for consultation and hearing.

Our *Discipline* provides our Board—before ousting employees (§1126; 1128,7), should give them a hearing. Is Board treatment of their fellow-Methodists to be less fair when those fellow-Methodists have been tenants in good standing for 33 years, paying their full rent each month and never receiving any complaint from the landlord?

3. *The Bishops were misrepresented.* The Board resolution on this question bases itself on the statement unanimously adopted by the Bishops of our church April 20, 1950. That statement alone is cited in justification of the proposed eviction.

Did the Board of Publication consult the Bishops of our church to ask them if their use of the Bishops' statement was accurate, objective or fair?

It is illogical and unfair to base proposed eviction of the Federation on the unanimous statement of our Bishops of April 20, 1950.

The use made by the Board of Publication of the Bishops' statement is partial, distorted, unobjective. (The same goes for anti-Federation spokesmen in the General Conference who claimed their position was based on the 1950 statement of the Bishops. John Satterfield of Mississippi, chief Circuit Rider representative at General Conference, told the delegates: "You are not asked to do more than was done by the unanimous action of our bishops. In fact, you are not asked to do as much." Or again: "Should it be said that we shall wait four years before we follow the action of our Council of Bishops?" Daily Advocate, p. 556. See also p. 551). The Board, in its resolution, failed to state that the Bishops in that unanimous April 20, 1950 resolution said concerning the Federation:

"The Federation was organized in 1907. Across the years, it has counted in membership some of our most distinguished Methodists and loyal Americans, and has made notable contributions in the field of social justice."

The 1950 Statement of the Council of Bishops was occasioned by the stir created by an unfair and distorted *Readers' Digest* article, written by an ex-Methodist. This article aroused the demand (on which the Board of Publication acted at its next annual meeting) that the Federation be ousted from its office at 150 Fifth Avenue. The Board claimed their ouster attempt was based on the resolution of our Bishops; but the demand for Federation ouster was in no way implied or raised by the Bishops, though it was both implied and raised by the High article, which the Bishops offset!

Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, Secretary of the Council of Bishops, published a specific reply to the High article which the *Readers' Digest* had refused to publish. In that reply to the distortions made by Mr. High and to the demands raised by his article, Bishop Oxnam stated:

"Mr. High gives no indication of the constructive service the Methodist Federation for Social Action has rendered the Church, a fact that explains the presence of bishops, pastors, laymen and officials in its membership. This Federation was organized in 1907, ten years before the Russian Revolution and twenty-five years before the New Deal. *It was quite natural that such an unofficial agency should have rented offices at 150 Fifth Avenue. This is an office building owned by The Methodist Publishing House and for years individuals, corporations and groups other than official Methodist boards and commissions have had offices there.* (Italics ours).

"The Federation was chiefly responsible for drafting the now historic Social Creed of the Churches, a creative and constructive formulation of Christian principle and practice, which Mr. High strongly commended but a few years ago.

"In 1924, the General Conference appointed a commission to study social service in The Methodist Church. Its chairman was Bishop Adna Leonard, who was generally recognized as a most able and conservative leader. He presented the report of this commission to the General Conference of 1932. Its concluding words are, 'Our study of the work of the Methodist Federation for Social Service leads us to the conclusion that the peculiar and exceedingly important work which has been undertaken by this body of Methodists can best be prosecuted through an agency organized and operating in the manner which has characterized this Federation during the last quarter of a century.' The report stressed the fact that 'the Federation does not speak, nor does it attempt to speak, officially for the Church,' and concluded, 'the commendations of this social agency which, from time to time have been given by the General Conference, have been fully justified'."

4. *The Board's action sets a serious precedent of censorship.* The Board's resolution did cite the Bishops' expression of disagreement with certain undated and unspecified statements which had appeared

at some time before April, 1950, in the Social Questions Bulletin. The Bulletin's editor responded in October, 1950:

"We will welcome a statement for publication from the Bishops, identifying, dating, and refuting the statements with which they disagree. Our commitment to accuracy is unequivocal. We will always correct inaccuracies."

A statement of difference among Methodists does not imply a need for punitive action or for censorship. Indeed the Bishops in their April 20, 1950 resolution reiterated this statement from their 1948 Episcopal address—a statement thoroughly contrary to such censorship or punitive action:

"We are determined that free preachers, occupying a free pulpit, preaching to free laymen in a free land shall proclaim the freeing truth of the religion of Jesus."

The Bishops further warned:

"We Methodists must not allow hysteria and fear to rob us of confidence in our leadership nor divert us from our task."

This is further evidence that the Board's request of the Federation to vacate its office (a request made without consultation with the Federation or with its Methodist leaders)—in no way follows from the Bishops' resolution, upon which the Board's resolution verbally was based. Indeed we fail to see either the connection in logic, or the harmony in spirit, between these two resolutions.

For further and more current evidence of the mind of our Bishops on the question of censorship and freedom in the Methodist Church, see their 1952 Episcopal Address, delivered by Bishop Kern, which stated:

"There have always been both preachers and laymen among us who want to declare 'out of bounds' any Methodist who dares to think and preach independently and creatively upon the issues of the current social and economic order. They profess a great love for their church; they have a heavy stake in the preservation of the existing order; and they want their church to stay off controversial subjects and proclaim what they so naively call the 'old-fashioned gospel.' They want to preserve 'the original character of Methodism.'"

"Would God they knew their history better! Early Methodism stood in the center of a swirling century of revolution and preached alike its gospel of regeneration and social reform. Original Methodism was a bold and challenging defense of the rights of the underprivileged and the dispossessed against the predatory indifference of an economic aristocracy most of whom were perfectly decorous members of a church that had forgotten its mission to the multitude. This social concern is in our blood stream."

The implication that tenants connected with disapproved publications or opinions, should be ousted, is very serious.

The Board of Publication was not set up to be a Board of censorship. Power of that Board, as landlord, to censor the alleged views of its tenants, or of publications related to its tenants, has never been given the Board by the General Conference.

For that Board now to assume, or for churchmen now to grant, such censorship powers over tenants would set a serious precedent, threatening freedom of other publications emanating from 150 Fifth Avenue, or from the other publishing house buildings. Consider church school literature, mailings of the Woman's Division of Christian Service in the field of Christian Social Relations, mailings of the Commission on World Peace, or of our Methodist Youth Conference, etc. Here is a camel's nose. Dare we let it under the tent, to put an official Board of our church into the presumptive business of censorship or thought control?

Censorship: Of Ideas or of Morals?

If we did believe our Methodist landlords should censor their tenants, would that censorship be more Wesleyan or Methodistic in the realm of ideas, or in the realm of morals?

Let us illustrate. How much money has been received by the same Board of Publication from the tenant which at the very entrance to this same 150 Fifth Avenue Building displays for sale cocktail shakers and glasses, thus directly aiding and abetting the liquor traffic which the Methodist Church so consistently has opposed? Do we want our retired preachers to benefit in their pensions from money gained in this direct promotion of the traffic in intoxicating, alcoholic beverages? No one has ever accused the Federation of advertising liquor, or of selling cocktail shakers.

The Board of Publication was factually off-base when it claimed or implied support of our Bishops in proposing eviction of the Federation from the 150 Fifth Avenue Building. Fortunately, our Bishops have never asked for such ouster. Neither should any who treasure our Methodist and American traditions.

Other Points in the Majority Resolution

1. Disapproval of Unspecified Views

The adopted majority resolution stated: "That the Methodist Church does not approve many of the statements and policies of the Methodist Federation for Social Action (Unofficial)."

From the first beginnings of Methodism our church has been one believing in the principle of live and let live, think and let think. In the many General Conferences of Methodism, the temptation has been resisted to single out any unofficial body of Methodists for special attack.

Methodism's traditional and loyal defense of tolerance and of freedom, has served it well. Are we now to abandon this great tradition, and these basic principles?

Never before has The Methodist Church considered itself as censor of the social views or statements or policies of any of its individual members or unofficial groups. That is utterly alien to historic Methodist and American traditions.

This smacks of a kind of thought control which would make our freedom-loving founder John Wesley turn over in his grave.

The paragraph singles out for criticism one of many of the unofficial Methodist groups or organs in our midst. What is the implication of this? Is it that there is disapproval of many of the statements and policies of the unofficial Federation but approval or acceptance of the statements and policies of "The Methodist Challenge," "One Methodist Voice," "Circuit Riders, Inc., Membership Composed of Methodists," "The Committee for the Preservation of Methodism," or the many other unofficial Methodist bodies not named?

In any secular court of law, an accused criminal is entitled to a bill of particulars, to specific charges. Any such general and undocumented statement of disapproval as that above would be thrown out of any court of law by any judge loyal to our American judicial traditions. Should the General Conference, as legislative body of a fair-minded church, be less fair, less jealous of democratic and Methodist traditions, than our secular courts of law which do not even profess to be based on the Gospel of Jesus?

Furthermore, ambiguous and unspecified charges of this kind fail to edify or illuminate. If the Federation has taken erroneous or un-Methodistic stands, let them be specified. Thus the Federation will be given light as to where, in the judgment of the Methodist Church, it should change its stands. This is so, that is, if our church now for the first time in history wants to presume the role of censorship—of telling Methodist individuals or organizations what views or stands are to be approved, and what disapproved—of setting up, as it were, an official Methodist line.

A point-by-point comparison of the statements and policies of the Methodist Federation for Social Action (and of other unofficial Methodist groups and publications), on the one hand, and the parallel or differing statements and policies of the General Conference (which alone speaks for the Methodist Church) on the other hand—might be illuminating to Methodists and to the general public. We, on our part, would welcome that. But it would require careful investigation and valid documentation to prevent misrepresentation of either the unofficial bodies or of the General Conference.

Perhaps the Church's new Board of Social and Economic Relations would undertake this. If so, we of the Methodist Federation for Social Action assure our fullest and friendliest cooperation.

2. *Would the General Conference support organizational freedom?* The too-hastily adopted majority resolution also stated: "That The General Conference announces and emphasizes that The Methodist Federation for Social Action (unofficial) has no right to take any action *which in any way might be construed as speaking for or reflecting the sentiment or position of The Methodist Church.*" (Italics ours).

We believe the General Conference delegates wanted to be fair—so can only conclude they were too hurried to understand their own statement.

It would, if applied, put the Methodist Federation for Social Action (or any unofficial Methodist organization) out of business—by making the impossible demand that the Federation do nothing which would be misconstrued, perhaps even deliberately, by others (for whose irrational imaginings and misconstruings the Federation cannot possibly be held to account).

The general public unfortunately often depends on inadequate sources of information and is misinformed. How then can the Federation or its members possibly control or prevent misconstruings? Some Federation enemies and critics are so prejudiced they cannot possibly be objective. How can the Federation guarantee against their misunderstanding?

No organization could meet that test. No organization can take responsibility for the misconstruings of outside individuals, for which the organization in question has no responsibility.

3. *Federationists will all agree with the General Conference resolution's conclusion: "That we do reaffirm the historic position of The Methodist Church of the right of its people to interpret the Christian faith in the field of social and economic relations and to work to bring our social order more nearly into conformity with the teachings of Christ in accordance with the dictates of their own consciences."*

The Federation has been acting on this right for forty-five years and always defends it for others. It will continue to do so, probably for many years to come.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE BOARD OF PUBLICATION AND THE METHODIST FEDERATION FOR SOCIAL ACTION

The Methodist Publishing House

September 22, 1950

Methodist Federation for Social Action
Gentlemen:

Attached hereto is a copy of a resolution adopted by the Board of Publication of The Methodist Church at its annual meeting, held in Dallas, Texas, on September 13-14, 1950.

In accordance with the last paragraph of the resolution ("... that the Publishing Agents be directed to give effect to this resolution by proper and reasonable notice hereof to the Federation; ...") this letter will serve as your official notice of this action.

We shall appreciate your acknowledgment of this letter and its enclosure. We assume, of course, it will be your purpose to comply with the spirit and intent of the action of the Board of Publication, and we shall appreciate word from you regarding your plans to that end at your early convenience.

Sincerely yours,
Lovick Pierce,
Roy L. Smith,
Publishing Agents

Resolution adopted by The Board of Publication of The Methodist Church at its annual meeting, held in Dallas, Texas, on September 13-14, 1950.

WHEREAS, The Council of Bishops of The Methodist Church by resolution adopted April 20, 1950, and issued to the Church by the President and Secretary of the Council on May 24, 1950, have declared that the "Methodist Federation for Social Action" is not and does not claim to be an authorized agency of The Methodist Church; that it is a voluntary and independent organization "not responsible to the Church," which "does not speak for the Church," and over which "neither the General Conference nor the Council of Bishops has jurisdiction;"

AND WHEREAS, The Council of Bishops, in its resolution of April 20, 1950, commended to the Federation the dropping of the word "Methodist" from its title in order to "clarify in the public mind the independent nature of the Federation," and further said: "We deplore and sharply disagree with certain positions taken and statements published of late in the Federation's official *Bulletin*;"

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED by the Board of Publication of The Methodist Church that further occupancy by the "Methodist Federation for Social Action" of space in the building at 150 Fifth Avenue, New York, which is an official address of this Board and of other authorized agencies of The Methodist Church, is not justified and should be discontinued; that the Publishing Agents be directed to give effect to this resolution by proper and reasonable notice hereof to the Federation; and that no property under the control and trusteeship of this Board be hereafter rented to or occupied by any organization or association using the word "Methodist" in its name, title, or description without authority.

Methodist Federation for Social Action

Mr. Lovick Pierce & Dr. Roy L. Smith
Gentlemen:

September 26, 1950

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of September 22, together with the enclosed resolution.

Both are being brought to the attention of the Federation's president and executive committee.

Sincerely yours,
Jack R. McMichael
Executive Secretary

December 22, 1950

Mr. Lovick Pierce
Dr. Roy L. Smith
Publishing Agents
Dear Friends:

In its recent meeting our Executive Committee discussed this matter and your earlier communication. The Committee voted to ask you to transmit to the Board of Publication expression of our desire to have representatives of the Federation meet with the Board of Publication at the latter's convenience.

We would appreciate your informing the Board also that—at the first meeting of the Federation following the action of the Council of Bishops suggesting a change of name—the Federation voted to submit this suggestion to all Federation members by mail for their vote. This vote is to be completed in December.

We are quite sure that the action of the Board of Publication came in large degree from misstatements and misunderstandings on the part of persons outside the Board.

Inasmuch as one point made by the Board has to do with the unofficial character of the Federation, we remind the Board that from the beginning (43 years ago) the unofficial character of the Federation has been recognized. In conversations held from the beginning between representatives of the Federation and General Conference Committees—it was emphasized that the Federation did not

propose only to advance views which the members of the Federation necessarily held, but which they considered should be called to the attention of the Church.

With best wishes.

Sincerely,
Francis J. McConnell, President
Jack R. McMichael, Executive Secretary

The Methodist Publishing House

Bishop Francis J. McConnell, President
Mr. Jack R. McMichael, Executive Secretary
Gentlemen:

January 5, 1951

Your letter of December 22, in response to our communication conveying the action of the Board of Publication regarding the Federation's occupancy of quarters in the building at 150 Fifth Avenue, N.Y., was received during the holiday season and, under the circumstances, an unavoidable time-lag has occurred in acknowledging it.

The nature of your request for an opportunity to appear before the Board of Publication necessitates a consultation with Judge William H. Swiggart, Chairman of the Board, and Judge Swiggart's absence from the city has prevented that consultation. He has just returned, and, in a telephone conversation today, has suggested that we acknowledge your letter, explaining the circumstances involved in the delay. Because of his absence, he has not had an opportunity to study the matter; and crowded schedules will prevent a fuller reply for a few days.

Cordially yours,
Lovick Pierce & Roy L. Smith
Publishing Agents

Bishop Francis J. McConnell, President
Mr. Jack R. McMichael, Executive Secretary
Gentlemen:

January 12, 1951

Upon returning to the city this morning I find that Judge William H. Swiggart, Chairman of the Board of Publication, has written a letter to me conveying his reaction to the point raised in your letter of December 22.

Since Judge Swiggart's letter expresses very thoroughly the position of the Board of Publication, I have his permission to forward it to you as the Publishing Agents' reply to your communication, although, as Judge Swiggart states in the second paragraph, "No one has authority to speak for the Board in response to the request except the Board itself."

Sincerely yours,
Lovick Pierce
for Publishing Agents

The Nashville Chattanooga and St. Louis Railway

Wm. H. Swiggart
Vice-President and General Counsel
Mr. Lovick Pierce
Dear Mr. Pierce:

January 9th, 1951

I have read the letter addressed to you and Dr. Smith by Bishop McConnell and Mr. McMichael, as officers of the Methodist Federation for Social Action dated December 22, 1950, requesting you to transmit to the Board of Publication their desire to have representatives of the Federation meet with the Board, in respect of the Board's resolution adopted in September, 1950, at Dallas.

No one has authority to speak for the Board in response to the request except the Board itself. The next meeting of the Board is to be held in September, 1951.

The Executive Committee of the Board of Publication will meet in Chicago on January 30, 1951, and I presume you will present to the Committee your report of the delay on the part of the Federation in complying with the Board's resolution, including reference to the letter of December 22nd, for whatever action the Committee may deem proper, consistent with the resolution of the Board.

The language of the resolution leaves no support for the suggestion made in the letter that it was brought about by "misstatements and misunderstandings on the part of persons outside the Board." The resolution refers to and is grounded upon the declaration of the Council of Bishops that clarification in the public mind of the independent nature of the Federation is desirable.

The Board of Publication has not attempted to sit in judgment upon the Federation. It has recognized only that the Federation has become a controversial organization and that its continued use of an official address of authorized agencies of the church will prolong controversy and create added confusion among Methodists. Obviously the "independence" of the Federation would be emphasized by the issuance of their Bulletin from another address, as well as by the elimination of the word "Methodist" from its title.

I do not personally know Bishop McConnell or Mr. McMichael, but I am sure they do not desire a disservice to the Board of Publication by involving it longer in a controversy it seeks to avoid, and

I have hoped and expected that they would cooperate with the Board's resolution as the declaration of policy by an official agency of the Church with respect to the use of property committed by the Church to its trusteeship. I still believe that proper understanding of the Board's resolution will bring compliance with its purpose by the Federation's officers.

The Board of Publication and the Publishing House have not participated in public discussion of the merits of the Federation's program or policies. The Board has acted only within the scope of its delegated responsibility, in its determination that, in view of the action of the Council of Bishops of the Methodist Church, it is no longer justified in housing the Federation. Unless the Federation's officers desire to involve the Publishing House in a controversy with which it is not officially concerned, they will graciously recognize the fact that the Board's resolution goes no further than to give effect to the Council of Bishops' declaration that clarification of the independent nature of the Federation is desirable in the interest of the whole church, and that the resolution can harm the Federation only if they do not choose to respect it.

Yours sincerely,

Wm. H. Swiggart, Chairman,
Board of Publication

The Board of Publication of The Methodist Church

October 15, 1951

Bishop Francis J. McConnell

Mr. Jack R. McMichael

Dear Brethren:

The Board of Publication, at its meeting in New York, September 10-13, 1951, reaffirmed its action of one year ago requesting the Methodist Federation for Social Action to vacate their offices at 150 Fifth Avenue, New York, and requested me, as acting secretary, to so inform you. This letter is in compliance with that request and gives you due notice of said action.

It is the desire of the Board of Publication that your acknowledgment of this letter be sent to the secretary of the Board, Dr. Fred J. Jordan, 227 Garfield Street, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, and that you indicate to him the cooperation which may be expected from you.

Yours very truly,

Rufus C. Baker, *Acting Secretary*

The Board of Publication of The Methodist Church

November 13, 1951

Mr. Jack R. McMichael

Dear Brother,

Following the annual meeting of the Board of Publication in New York, September 12-13 a letter was sent to you informing you of the action taken by the Board reaffirming their previous action regarding the Methodist Federation for Social Action.

The letter requested that your acknowledgment of the letter should come to me as Secretary.

To date I have received no reply. Has it got lost in the mails, or did you fail to receive the letter?

Kindly advise me so that I may complete my file.

Cordially yours,

Fred J. Jordan

Secretary Board of Publication

Methodist Federation for Social Action

Mr. Fred J. Jordan

November 23, 1951

Dear Brother Jordan:

Thank you for your letter of November 13 and for the earlier communication from Brother Baker.

These have been passed on to Bishop McConnell, our President, and will be dealt with by our Executive Committee which meets next month.

Cordially yours,

Jack R. McMichael

The Board of Publication of the Methodist Church

January 22, 1952

Mr. Jack McMichael

Dear Brother,

On November 23rd, 1951 you sent me a letter acknowledging my letter as Secretary of the Board of Publication in which I had requested information of any action taken by your organization relative to vacating premises at 150 Fifth Avenue, New York.

In your letter you said the letter had been passed on to Bishop McConnell, "and will be dealt with by our Executive Committee which meets next month."

Will you now inform me what action was taken?

The matter has been pending so long that we should have some definite word from you. Can you give it to us at this time?

I am sure that you will agree that just common courtesy would require some action and statement of the same.

Please inform me as soon as possible.

Sincerely yours,

Fred J. Jordan

Methodist Federation for Social Action

Mr. Fred J. Jordan

January 25, 1952

Dear Brother Jordan:

We acknowledge your letter of January 22, 1952. We refer you

to our letter of December 22, 1950, addressed to Mr. Lovick Pierce, and Dr. Roy L. Smith, Publishing Agents. That letter referred to action taken in November, 1950, by the Executive Committee of the Methodist Federation for Social Action expressing "our desire to have representatives of the Federation meet with the Board of Publication at the latter's convenience."

At the December, 1951 meeting of the Federation's Executive Committee, the Executive Committee reaffirmed the previous action.

The September, 1950 resolution of the Board of Publication, adopted at Dallas, Texas, was reaffirmed in 1951. That resolution was based exclusively on a resolution concerning the Methodist Federation for Social Action adopted by the Council of Bishops of the Methodist Church on April 20, 1950. The latter resolution, however, made no reference to the Federation's headquarters address. Nor did it in any way suggest or authorize pressure on the Federation to vacate its National Office.

It would appear, therefore, that the subsequent action of the Board of Publication (though verbally based on the resolution of the Bishops) was in fact a non sequitur.

In its reference to the 1950 statement of the Council of Bishops the September, 1950 resolution of the Board of Publication failed altogether to cite these statements concerning the Methodist Federation for Social Action which the Bishops included in their resolution:

"The Federation was organized in 1907. Across the years, it has counted in membership some of our most distinguished Methodists and loyal Americans, and has made notable contributions in the field of social justice."

The Board's resolution did cite the Bishops' expression of disagreement with certain undated and unspecified statements which had appeared at some time before April, 1950 in the Social Questions Bulletin. The Bulletin's editor responded in October, 1950:

"We will welcome a statement for publication from the Bishops, identifying, dating and refuting the statements with which they disagree. Our commitment to accuracy is unequivocal. We will always correct inaccuracies."

A statement of difference among Methodists does not imply a need for punitive action or for censorship. Indeed the Bishops in their April, 1950 resolution reiterated this statement from their latest Episcopal address—a statement thoroughly contrary to such censorship or punitive action:

"We are determined that free preachers, occupying a free pulpit, preaching to free laymen in a free land shall proclaim the freeing truth of the religion of Jesus."

The Bishops further warned:

"We Methodists must not allow hysteria and fear to rob us of confidence in our leadership nor divert us from our task."

This is further evidence that the Board's request of the Federation to vacate its office (a request made without consultation with the Federation or with its Methodist leaders)—in no way follows from the Bishops' resolution, upon which the Board's resolution verbally was based. Indeed we fail to see either the connection in logic, or the harmony in spirit, between these two resolutions.

With renewed expression of our willingness to meet with the Board of Publication for discussion of the Board's request, we remain

Sincerely yours,

Francis J. McConnell, *President*

Jack R. McMichael, *Executive Secretary*

The Board of Publication of the Methodist Church

Mr. Jack R. McMichael

January 29, 1952

Dear Brother McMichael

Thank you for your letter received this morning.

It will be presented to the next meeting of our Executive Committee.

I appreciate your prompt and candid reply to my letter as Secretary of this Board.

Cordially yours,

Fred J. Jordan

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President: Bishop Francis J. McConnell; Vice Presidents:

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Associate Secretaries: W. T. Brown, Mark Chamberlin.

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